Ministry of Social Services

Plan for 2013-14

Government of Saskatchewan

PLAN FOR 2013-14

Statement from the Minister

The Government's Direction and Budget for the upcoming year are focused on sound economic growth and shared prosperity. I am pleased to present Social Services' Plan for Balanced Growth for 2013-14 and beyond. This strategy will help make life better for Saskatchewan's most vulnerable citizens by supporting their inclusion in the province's prosperity.

This year, we will build on a number of important initiatives where we have started to see progress and begin work on new programs that will benefit people in need. Working with our First Nations and Métis partners, we will continue to renew the child welfare system and enhance prevention supports so that children can remain in the family home. With our partners in the housing sector, we will work to increase supply and affordability through continued implementation of the Housing Strategy for Saskatchewan. We will focus on making Saskatchewan the best place in Canada for people with disabilities by expanding the Saskatchewan Assured Income for Disability program and lead the development of a comprehensive disability strategy. These are only a handful of actions we will undertake this year to ensure that all Saskatchewan people have a bright future and are able to share in the promise of this great province.

The Ministry will report on progress made toward this plan, within the financial parameters provided, in the 2013-14 Annual Report.

The Honourable June Draude
Minister of Social Services

Response to Government Direction

The government remains committed to further establishing Saskatchewan as the best place to live, work and raise a family.

The Saskatchewan Plan for Growth – Vision 2020 and Beyond identifies principles, goals and actions to ensure Saskatchewan continues to benefit from the opportunities and meet the challenges of a growing province. Keeping government's focus on *Balanced Growth*, the plan outlines the key activities that the Government of Saskatchewan will undertake in pursuit of sustained, disciplined growth and a better Saskatchewan.

Government's Vision

"...a strong and growing Saskatchewan, the best place in Canada – to live, to work, to start a business, to get an education, to raise a family and to build a life."

Sustaining growth and opportunities for Saskatchewan people	Improving our quality of life	Making life more affordable	Delivering responsive and responsible government

Government's vision and four goals provide the framework for ministries, agencies and third parties to focus on achieving greater success in the delivery of government services. *The Saskatchewan Plan for Growth – Vision 2020 and Beyond* provides the enabling strategies and actions that the Government of Saskatchewan will undertake to build a strong and growing Saskatchewan. The 2013-14 budget theme of *Balanced Growth* reflects the government's commitment to achieving the Saskatchewan Plan for Growth.

All ministries and agencies will report on progress and results achieved in their 2013-14 annual reports. This honours government's commitment to keep its promises and ensures greater transparency and accountability to the people of Saskatchewan.

Mission, Strategies and Actions

Mission Statement

We protect Saskatchewan's vulnerable people and support their inclusion in the province's prosperity

CITIZEN-CENTRED SERVICES:

Programs and services that set the foundation to meet our clients' basic needs

Strategy

Lead and support child welfare transformation

Key Actions

- Work differently with First Nations and Métis partners to develop agreements for prevention and mandated services.
- Develop a flexible response pilot to create an easily accessible prevention family support stream.

Strategy

Lead and support the implementation of the Housing Strategy for Saskatchewan

Key Actions

- Modify and improve the housing delivery system.
- Target housing programs and services to those in need.
  - Invest $344 million to add 12,600 new housing units by 2016 to provide better access to safe, quality and affordable housing through initiatives such as: Investments in Affordable Housing (IAH), rental construction and affordable home ownership grants for municipalities, and a corporate income tax rebate for new rental units.
  - Sell 300 government-owned single-family housing units in Regina, Moose Jaw, and Prince Albert, and undeveloped land in Regina, and reinvest the proceeds in new medium-density, multi-unit affordable housing.

Photo Credit: Enterprise Saskatchewan, Greg Huszar Photography, Mosaic Belle Plaine site

Strategy

Improve the quality of life and support community inclusion for people with disabilities

Key Actions

- Continue to implement the recommendations of the Task Team on Income Support for People with Disabilities.
- Expand and improve a continuum of services that meet the needs of people with intellectual disabilities including residents of Valley View Centre who will be transitioned to replacement services.

CITIZEN INDEPENDENCE SUPPORT:

Citizen independence through self-reliance and prevention

Strategy

Lead and support child welfare transformation

Key Actions

- Review and revise current legislation to inform child welfare transformation.
- Expand existing prevention services to help maintain children in the family home.

Strategy

Lead and support the implementation of the Housing Strategy for Saskatchewan

Key Actions

- Support housing stakeholders to influence an adequate supply of housing.
- Provide leadership for the provincial government in housing matters.

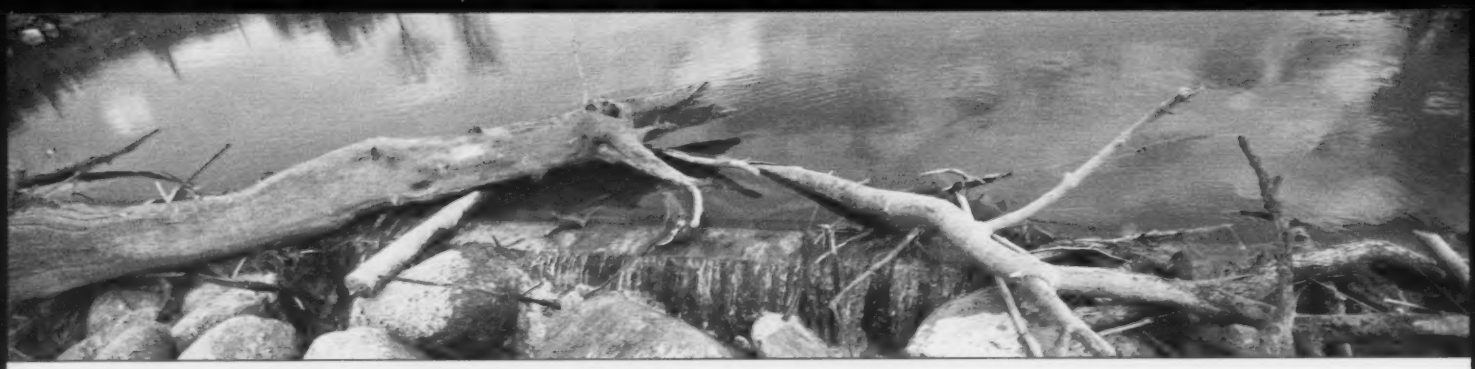


Photo Credit: Saskatchewan Watershed Authority, photo by Jim Kroshius, Five Mile Weir

Strategy

Improve the quality of life and support community inclusion for people with disabilities

Key Actions

- Develop a comprehensive Disability Strategy in consultation with community and other Government ministries to help make Saskatchewan the best place in Canada to live for people with disabilities. The strategy will focus on:
  - accessible, available housing and transportation;
  - employment and education opportunities; and
  - respite for families and caregivers.

EFFECTIVE AND EFFICIENT ORGANIZATION:

Effectiveness and efficiency of our people and our organization

Strategy

Foster a culture of leadership where employees strive for innovation, continuous improvement and service excellence

Key Actions

- Develop and implement a succession, attraction and retention plan that helps create a diverse and inclusive work place.
- Clarify, strengthen and reinforce high performance behavior and values to advance organizational effectiveness.
- Develop and implement a re-imaging plan to highlight the positive aspects of employment with the Ministry
- Promote and support an environment of continuous learning and development.
- Support a safe, healthy and respectful work environment by implementing healthy workplace practices, and best practices in occupational health and safety.

Photo Credit: Ministry of Parks, Culture and Sport, Devona Hill Photography, Rolling Pines Golf and Country Resort

Strategy

Improve client outcomes and ensure the best use of public funds through program, service, and process alignment and continuous improvement efforts

Key Actions

- Apply a citizen-centered lens to ensure that client needs and expectations become the driving force behind service delivery.
- Support the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation to become more effective and efficient in property management.
- Implement an enterprise-wide client information system (Linkin) to provide efficient citizen-centred support for clients and programs.
- Renew service delivery approach and computer systems for Income Assistance and Disability Services.

Strategy

Enhance accountability of Ministry programs and services

Key Actions

- Develop and implement:
  - A risk management framework;
  - A business technology plan; and
  - An improved performance management system.

Strategy

Improve service delivery through partnerships with other governments, Ministries and community partners

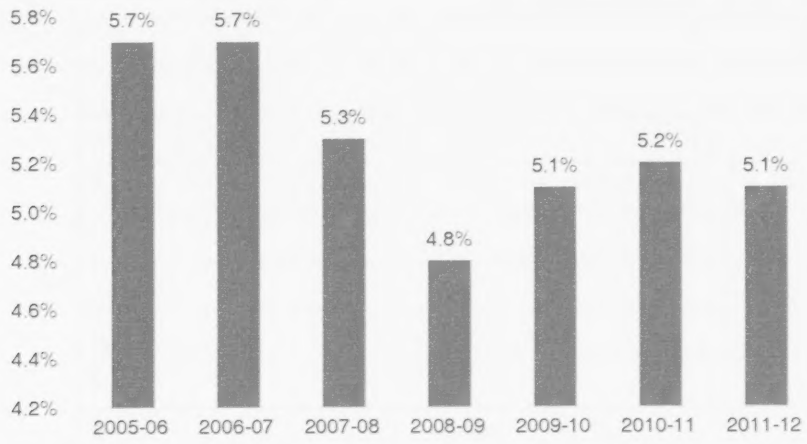
Key Actions

- Develop a protocol agreement with other human service Ministries to better serve children with complex needs.
- Support the action plan for the Saskatchewan Children and Youth Agenda.
- Lead efforts to address key aspects of gender equality in the province through engagement of government ministries, Crown Corporations, agencies and stakeholders.
- Examine options to build capacity and support sustainability in the community-based organization sector.

Performance Measures

Measure

Proportion of the Saskatchewan population aged 0 to 64 years who receive social assistance



Source: Social Services, Social Worker Information Network (SWIN), TEA, SAP and SAID beneficiaries; Saskatchewan Health Covered Population 2005-06 to 2011-12

Measure Description

The social assistance dependency rate reflects the proportion of Saskatchewan's off-reserve population aged 0 to 64 years who depend on provincial social assistance programs for some or all of their income.

Social assistance provides for the basic needs of individuals and families who have no alternate means of financial support. Social assistance recipients include beneficiaries from three major programs. The Saskatchewan Assistance Program (SAP) is designed for families and individuals who for various reasons, including illness or unemployment, cannot meet the costs of basic living. The Transitional Employment Allowance (TEA) is an income support program for people who are more job-ready and are seeking employment. The Saskatchewan Assured Income for Disability (SAID) program is an income support program for people with significant and long-term disabilities.

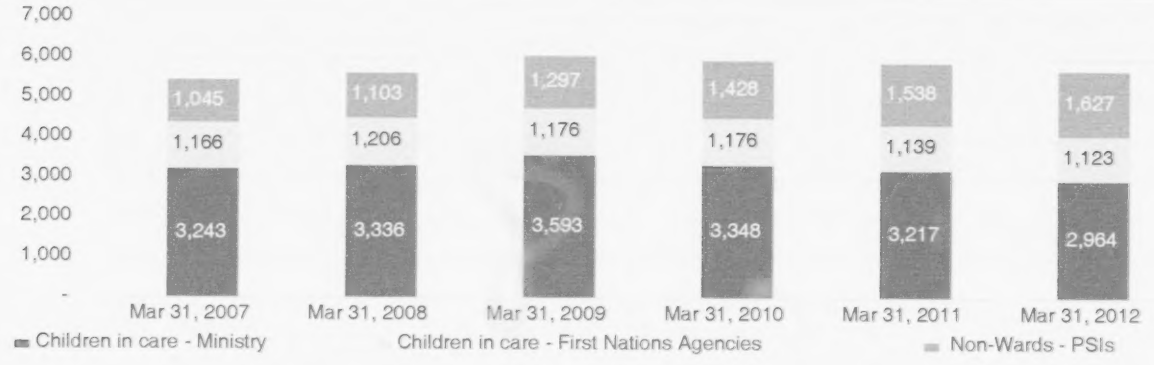
The social assistance dependency rate is influenced by population change, the state of the economy, demand for labour, and disability rates. Over the past six years, the social assistance dependency rate decreased from 5.7 per cent in 2005-06 to 5.1 per cent in 2011-12. For employable clients, Saskatchewan's economic growth has translated into increased labour force opportunities and supported faster transitions into the workforce. The Ministry, in partnership with the Ministry of the Economy, helps clients transition to the labour force through programs such as *Accelerated Connections to Employment*, *JobsFirst*, and *Employment Services for Parents*. The Ministry also supports clients who are moving into the labour market with income supplements to bridge the transition from social assistance to independence.

In 2013-14, the Ministry will continue to help clients meet basic needs and support the transition of employable clients toward economic self-sufficiency. On-going and planned future work to shape income assistance programs from a new technology platform will improve income supports, decrease complexity, and ensure income assistance programs are provided efficiently.

Photo Credit: Tourism Saskatoon, City of Bridges

Measure

Number of children in out-of-home care[1]



Source(s): Social Services, Monthly Automated Client Index Report (MR09), Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada (AANDC) and Linkin extracts, March 31st, 2006-12
Note: 1) AANDC data is reported annually on March 31 and later reconciled. The reported figure is an aggregation of both children in care and Non wards
2) Aggregated figures may distort the total number of children
3) PSI is a "person of sufficient interest". This designation may include extended family, the Chief of a Band or designate where a child is a status Indian, or "any other person who is not a parent of the child but who, in the opinion of the court, has a close connection with a child"

The data provided for the number of children in out-of-home care is a point-in-time measure showing the number of active cases on March 31st of the given fiscal year and includes all children in the province who are placed in out-of-home care and are involved with the Ministry as well as children who were apprehended by the Ministry off-reserve and placed on-reserve.

Measure Description

This measure identifies the overall number of cases of children in out-of-home care that are managed by the Ministry, as well as trends in the Ministry's management of out-of-home care options.

The number of children in out-of-home care reflects the Ministry's engagement with, and support of, vulnerable families to ensure that children at risk of neglect and abuse are safely sheltered in temporary or permanent out-of-home care. Out-of-home care options for children include placements in foster homes, group homes, and with extended family members or others with whom the child has a significant relationship. The four-year decline in the number of children in out-of-home care is good news.

To the extent that out-of-home placements are necessary to keep children safe and give families time to stabilize and strengthen, the most important story told by this measure may be the degree to which family, social relationships, and culture shape and inform out-of-home care arrangements. Child welfare in Saskatchewan is undergoing a fundamental transformation that is intended to achieve a high level of engagement with First Nations and Métis partners, support and strengthen family structures and relationships, and respect cultural integrity. This is consistent with Government's commitment to improve the quality of life for all Saskatchewan citizens and families, and achieve the four goals of Saskatchewan's Children and Youth Agenda: children get a good start in life; youth are prepared for their future; families are strong and communities are supportive.

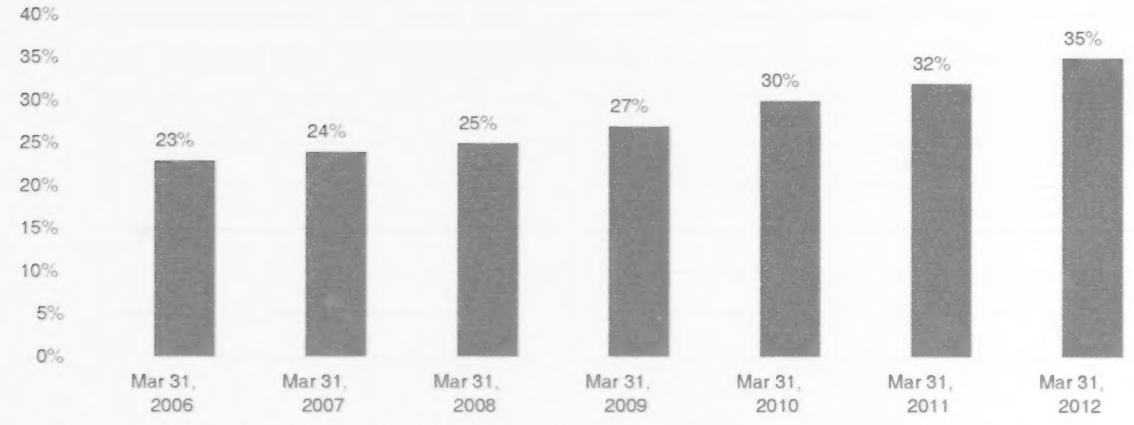
The imperative to provide prevention services and care for vulnerable children, including culturally appropriate options for First Nations and Métis children, is paramount. Success in work to transform child welfare will be reflected in improved child safety and well-being, and a reduction in the number of cases of children in the care of the Ministry.

In 2013-14, the Ministry will expand and sharpen its focus on prevention services to support at-risk families, help maintain children safely in the family home, and review and revise child welfare legislation.

Photo Credit: Ministry of Parks, Culture and Sport, Greg Huszar Photography, Over the Hill Orchards

Measure

Proportion of children placed in out-of-home care with extended family members or "persons with sufficient interest"



Source: Social Services, Monthly Automated Client Index Report (MR09) and Linkin extracts, March 31st, 2006-2012

Measure Description

This measure reflects the degree to which current and future prevention and support work with at-risk and high-risk families is successful in placing at-risk children in the care of extended family or near social relationships.

When children are at risk of abuse or neglect, it may be necessary for the Minister to find alternate living arrangements to ensure their safety and well-being. Placement with extended family, or other caregivers with whom a child has an existing and significant relationship, helps maintain important ties to family and community, and may be less emotionally wrenching for a child than being placed with strangers.

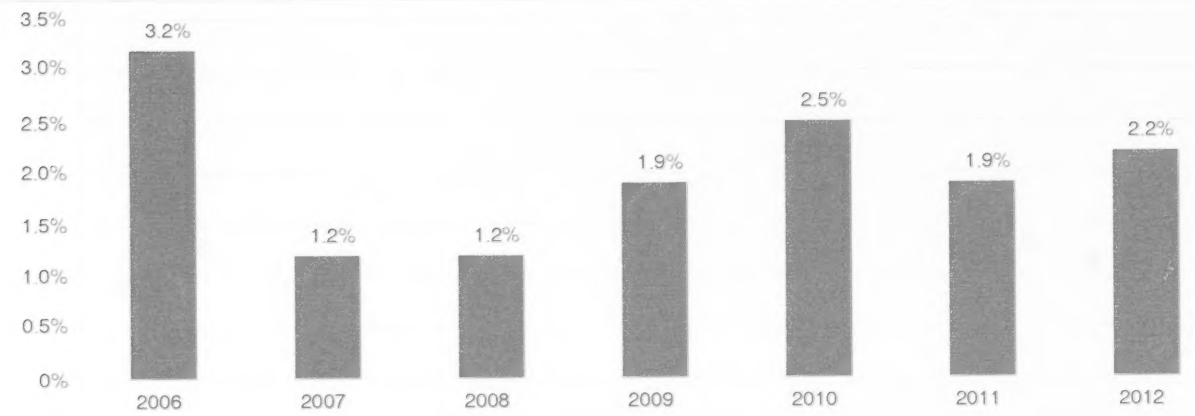
Over the past six years, the number of children placed with extended family and "persons of sufficient interest" has nearly doubled and continues to grow while the number of children in care of the Ministry declines. These are positive trends that reflect a deliberate and successful shift in child welfare philosophy and practice, a stronger voice for First Nations and Métis people, and the increased influence of family, community and culture in shaping the care of Saskatchewan children.

In 2013-14, the Ministry will continue its work to increase the security and safety of Saskatchewan children by collaborating with First Nations and Métis partners to: transform the province's child welfare system; expand prevention services that help families safely keep their children at home; review and revise child welfare legislation, and increase support for extended family caregivers. This work also supports the four goals of Saskatchewan's Children and Youth Agenda: children and youth get a good start in life; youth are prepared for their futures; families are strong; and communities are supportive.

Photo Credit: Ministry of Education

Measure

Average rental vacancy rate



Source: Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), Bi-annual Rental Market Survey http://cmhc.ca/en/index.cfm, October 2006-2012

Measure Description

The average rental vacancy rate measures the percentage of privately-initiated apartment units in projects of three or more units, of all bedroom types, that are physically unoccupied and available for immediate rental.

This measure is, in part, a reflection of the Ministry's work to ensure balance across the housing continuum. While the situation in the housing sector is strongly linked to the health of the economy and market incentives to develop or provide housing for rent, Government actions play a key role in ensuring balance across the housing continuum. This is consistent with Government's commitment to sustain growth and an affordable quality of life for the citizens of the province. The province's growing economy and population have created a strong demand for rental and homeownership housing in Saskatchewan communities. Stable and affordable housing enables people to work, engage in education and skills training opportunities, increase financial savings and participate in community life.

Between October 2011 and October 2012, the average vacancy rate in Saskatchewan's urban centres increased by 0.3 per cent to 2.2 per cent. This is a positive trend, although still below the optimal 3.0 per cent benchmark rate at which tenants are considered to have options and investment is profitable for owners. The increase in the average vacancy rate is, in part, attributable to the positive impact of housing-related initiatives and programs being funded and implemented through the Housing Strategy for Saskatchewan.

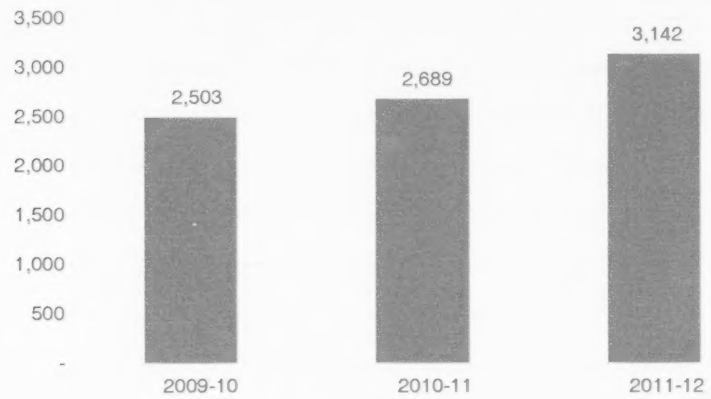
There were 1,072 urban rental market starts in 2012, a 30.3 per cent increase over 2011. The number of rental housing units started in 2012 was nearly 28 times higher than in 2006. New federal and provincial funding streams have dramatically increased the number of housing units available for low-to-moderate-income households.

In 2013-14, the Ministry will continue to work with housing sector partners to implement strategies to meet the housing needs of Saskatchewan's citizens. The Ministry will support communities to proactively develop community housing options, invest in better access to safe, quality and affordable housing initiatives, maintain existing government-supported housing, and develop entry-level, multi-unit housing options in Regina, Moose Jaw, and Prince Albert.

Photo Credit, Ministry of Parks, Culture and Sport, photo by Paul Austring, Holy Trinity Anglican Church, Stanley Mission, Lac La Ronge Provincial Park

Measure

Number of Saskatchewan Assured Income for Disability (SAID) beneficiaries



Source: Social Services, Social Worker Information Network (SWIN), Income Assistance Report ER02, monthly average April to March of 2011-2012 and 2010-11, and monthly average December to March of 2009-10.

Measure Description

The number of Saskatchewan Assured Income Disability (SAID) beneficiaries helps measure Government's commitment to provide for people with significant and enduring disabilities an income assistance program which meets their unique needs, and is distinct from social assistance.

This measure reflects Government's commitment to make Saskatchewan the best place in Canada to live for people with disabilities. The number of SAID beneficiaries increased between 2010-11 and 2011-12 from 2,689 to 3,142. This growth reflects, in part, Ministry efforts to identify and enrol in SAID an estimated 3,000 Saskatchewan Assistance Program clients who have documented long-term disabilities, and live in residential care facilities, family homes, and group homes.

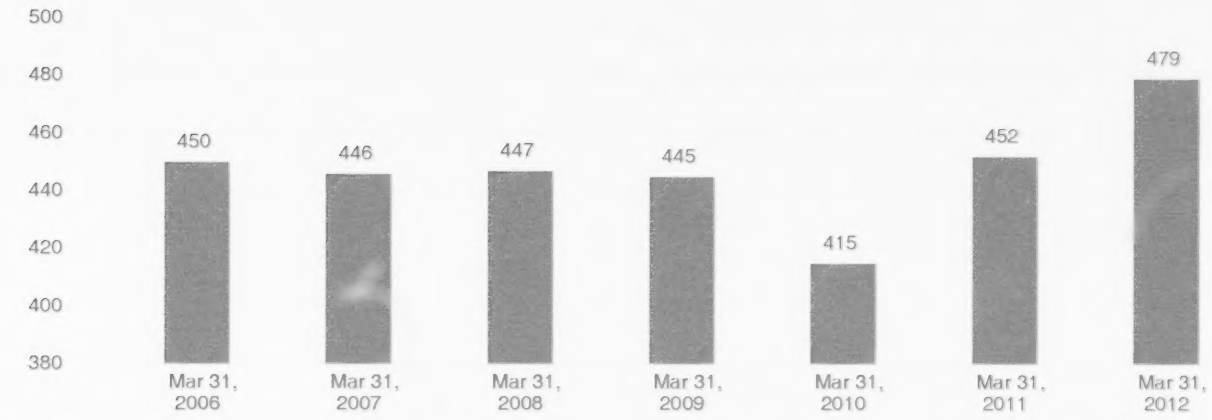
In 2012-13, the Saskatchewan Assured Income Disability program was expanded to include, and provide direct supports for, people with disabilities who live independently in their own homes or rented suites. At full enrolment, this program is expected to benefit about 10,000 people.

In 2013-14, the Ministry will continue to make every effort possible to provide information about SAID to people who may be eligible for the benefit. Future work to improve the quality of life for people with disabilities will include increases to living income benefits and enhancements to the SAID service delivery model including physical structure refinements, case management planning processes, development of a community and service delivery feedback loop, and client-based support services.

Photo Credit: Tourism Saskatoon, Broadway Bridge

Measure

Number of people with intellectual disabilities who live in their own residences through Ministry-funded independent living programs



Source: Social Services, Monthly Automated Client Index Report, March 31st, 2006 to 2012

Measure Description

This measure reflects the Ministry's efforts to ensure that people with disabilities have as much independence as possible, and choice over their lives and living arrangements.

Ensuring that all people are able to fully contribute to, and benefit from, community life and resources is a key part of making Saskatchewan the best place in Canada to live for people with disabiltiies. The number of people who live independently - typically in rental properties - and who are supported through Ministry-funded independent living programs, increased by six per cent in 2011-12, from 452 in 2010-11 to 479. The recent expansion of the Saskatchewan Assured Income for Disability program makes independent living a more affordable option for people with significant and enduring disabilities, and is expected to increase the number of people with disabilities who live independently.

This measure is impacted by several factors including a high level of demand for rental accommodation and competition for support workers. The number of support workers in the province limits the number of people who are able to live in Saskatchewan Independent Living programs. In addition, the kinds of supports that enable people with disabilities to live independently are typically provided by community-based organizations that are finding it a challenge to compete with other employers for workers in the province's growing economy.

In 2013-14, the Ministry will increase benefit levels for people with disabilities who live independently and, in consultation with the disability community, will develop a provincial disability strategy.

Photo Credit: Ministry of Parks, Culture and Sport, Hans-Gerhard Pfaff, Saskatchewan Legislative Building

Measure

Workforce diversity

	2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-11	2011-12	2011-12 SK Public Service
Aboriginal persons	11.5%	12.2%	12.2%	12.5%	12.7%	12.3%	11.7%	11.8%
Persons with a disability	3.8%	3.4%	3.2%	3.2%	3.2%	2.9%	3.3%	3.0%
Persons of visible minority	3.4%	3.8%	3.8%	4.1%	4.3%	3.5%	4.4%	4.2%
Women in senior management	41.7%	42.9%	36.4%	46.2%	43.8%	50.0%	57.9%	42.4%
Women in middle mgmt & other mgmt positions	55.3%	55.6%	54.2%	60.0%	62.5%	60.4%	54.0%	40.7%
Youth	10.8%	14.0%	15.4%	14.7%	15.5%	15.5%	16.4%	13.7%

Source: Government of Saskatchewan, Multi-Informational Database Application System (MIDAS), March 31st, 2006-2012.

Measure Description

This measure reflects the Ministry's ability to attract and retain Aboriginal people, people with disabilities, visible minorities, women, and youth in its workforce. Increasing employee diversity will shape the Ministry's workforce so it more closely reflects the provincial population, capitalize on the available labour force, and help produce thoughtful, creative solutions for Ministry clients.

The representation of people of visible minority, women in senior management, and youth, continues to improve and is on par with - or higher than, the representation of those groups in government as a whole.

The representation of Aboriginal people, people with disabilities, and women in middle management within the Ministry remains steady, and will be supported by the implementation of a succession, attraction and retention plan in 2013-14. The Ministry's Workforce Plan will help to shape an inclusive work environment that maximizes employee contributions and supports diversity. As an inclusive employer with a diverse and representative workforce, the Ministry will be well-positioned to serve clients more effectively, attract and retain employees, meet current and future skill shortages, and respond to complex challenges and emerging opportunities.

Financial Summary

2013-14 Estimates	(in thousands of dollars)
Central Management and Services	48,407
Child and Family Services	209,911
Income Assistance and Disability Services	607,087
Client Support	24,201
Housing	14,672
Total Appropriation	**904,278**
Capital Asset Acquisitions	(18,327)
Capital Asset Amortization	3,656
Total Expense	**889,607**
FTE Staff Complement	**1748.0**

For more information, see the Budget Estimates at: http://www.finance.gov.sk.ca/budget2013-14

Social Services 2013-14 Spending by Area

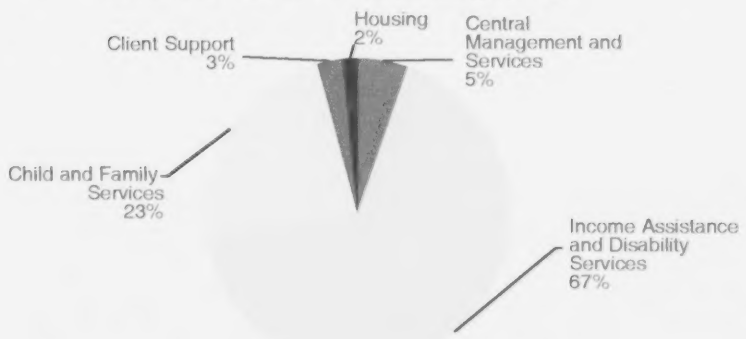


Photo Credit: Tourism Saskatchewan, David Buckley; Canoeing, MacFarlane River

Highlights

The Government of Saskatchewan is delivering on a commitment in the *Plan for Growth* to invest in a higher quality of life for all Saskatchewan citizens. That includes significant investments in the 2013-14 Ministry of Social Services budget in programs and services for some of the most vulnerable residents of Saskatchewan, including seniors, people with disabilities, children, families and those with low incomes.

The Social Services budget includes the following funding increases:

- $17.4 million for agencies that provide critical services to vulnerable adults and children. This includes $15.6 million to follow through on the commitment made in December 2012 to support recruitment and retention of front-line employees;
- $685,000 for workers in community-based organizations who did not see a funding increase on February 1, 2013, and $1.1 million for other increases to these agencies.

Income Assistance and Disability Supports

- $3.3 million to increase level of care rates for residents of Approved Private Service Homes;
- $3.2 million for the Seniors Income Plan, including a $10 per month increase to the benefit effective July 2013, plus a benefit increase of a maximum of $25 per month for clients living in special care homes. The Seniors Income Plan benefit is now $250 per month up $160 or 178 per cent since 2008 after being frozen at just $90 for 16 years;
- $3.8 million for the Saskatchewan Rental Housing Supplement to keep pace with increases in the rental market; and,
- $383,000 for the Personal Care Home Benefit to increase the monthly income threshold from $1,800 to $1,875.

The Budget also contains further enhancements to the Saskatchewan Assured Income for Disability (SAID) program. In June 2012, Government implemented the first installment of a four-year commitment to increase benefits under the SAID program by $100 per month for people in residential care, by $350 and $400 per month for single individuals and couples respectively who live in independent arrangements. In June 2013, the second of these planned increases will occur.

The Ministry will also begin community consultations in 2013-14 towards the development of a comprehensive Disability Strategy for the province.

Housing

The 2013-14 Ministry budget also continues the Province's commitment to the Saskatchewan Advantage Housing Plan, which will invest $344 million in 12,600 new housing units around the province by 2016.

In 2013-14 the Saskatchewan Housing Corporation will have almost $29 million to support the addition of 605 beds for post-secondary students, development of nearly 1,800 homes, and the repair of another 275 homes across the province, including:

- A $10 million investment in the proposed student residence at the University of Regina;
- Construction of 1,300 new rentals under the Rental Construction Incentive, with funding of $6.0 million;
- Development of 240 new homeownership units through the Affordable Home Ownership Program, with funding of $1.2 million;
- Support for 70 Secondary Suites, with funding of $1.0 million;
- Construction of 40 new homes through Habitat for Humanity with $2 million in funding;
- Repairs to 275 existing affordable housing units to keep them viable with $3.2 million through the Saskatchewan Repair Program; and

Photo Credit: Tourism Saskatchewan, David Buckley, Canoeing, MacFarlane River

- Construction of 140 new government-subsidized rental units with $5.0 million under the federal/provincial cost-shared Rental Development and Capital Rent Subsidy Programs.

Child and Family Services

In 2013-14, the Ministry will continue working with First Nations and Métis partner organizations to renew the child welfare system and enhance prevention supports to enable children to remain in the family home.

Highlights include:

- $5.8 million for child welfare transformation;
- $7.0 million to increase supports for agencies that provide services for children in care and their families;
- $0.8 million for intensive family supports to assist families in crisis; and,
- $1.8 million in funding will be maintained for the Structured Decision Making tool to help front-line workers assess risk and safety.

With fewer children coming into care, funding for Out-of-Home Residential and Extended Family Care is reduced by $3.8 million in 2013-14, while still allowing for a one per cent cost of living increase for caregivers.

For More Information

Please visit the Ministry's website at www.socialservices.gov.sk.ca for more information on the Ministry's programs and services, or call our Communications Branch at (306) 787-3686.

Front Page Photo Credits

Canola and flax fields	*Biking, Narrow Hills Provincial Park*	*Over the Hill Orchards*	*Saskatchewan Legislative Building*
Photographer, Charles Melnick	*Greg Huszar Photography*	*Greg Huszar Photography*	*Greg Huszar Photography*